

Food Pantry Contribution

For the month of January Faith Journey United Methodist Church is collecting canned fruit for the Food Pantry at North Syracuse Christian Church.



Empty Laundry Detergent Bottles

We are Collecting Empty laundry detergent bottles for St. Rose of Lima food pantry. They will refill the bottles with homemade detergent and give them out in their food pantry.



Seek

We seek God's presence in our lives, to help others in their relationship with God, and to strive to see God's work through all people.

Serve

We serve God through missions, encourage everyone on their spiritual journey, and follow the teachings of Jesus Christ.

Share

We create opportunities for all to share their gifts and talents, and demonstrate openness, acceptance, and hospitality.

God With Others

Office Location:

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Clay NY 13041

Contact Information:

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Faith Journey UMC Staff:

Pastor Rev. Bradford Hunt
Kathy LaDuca - Christian Education
Jennifer Dodge - Preschool Teacher
Kristy Lee Witt - Preschool Teacher
Maryna Mazhukhova - Musician
Daniel Williams - Musician
Karolyn Thomas - Administrative Assistant
Custodian - Sean Townsend



The Stepping Stone

January 2018



Pastor's Page

The pastor's New Year message;

My hope is that your Christmas was a great celebration. In addition to the great Christmas worship celebrations, we enjoyed family and gift giving. With Marty's and my family living further apart than ever before, it was a special gift to see each of them on Christmas day.

We are all now starting a new year. Holidays are a time to change up our living, and escape our daily routines. The New Year is a time to rethink our lives, and consider how we are to live.

As people of the faith, we worship a God that is never through creating, and is never through loving us, and never through with working God's will into the world. An important part of our faith is seeking forgiveness, and offering forgiveness. Which, in New Year's terms, means we can always start all over again.

Maintaining traditions can be a good thing. Building from the past can be a good thing. But what is most important, is the chance to start all over again.

Some folks will work towards creating New Year's resolutions. This is a great idea, but for many, they become impractical as they are soon forgotten. It is so easy to fall back into old patterns, especially in the slow days of winter.

Instead, we of the faith need to continually look for what God is doing new. We need to continually understand that the world is not as God would have it.

As we discover new ways to create settings and experiences that help people to accept the love of God, we will see lives change, and people responding to that love.

As we discover ways to embrace God's healing of our souls, we will see confining burdens fall away.

Pastor's Page (continued)

As we discover ways of actively living out God's mission with our voices and our hands and feet, we will discover that we just might be part of what God is doing in the world.

We will discover some of those things as we work to support the growing movement of Methodism in Syracuse, through the post refugee churches. We will discover some of these ideas as we work to re-open the Cradle and Beyond ministry and create a new worship community. We will discover some of this as our Little Steps program looks to expand. We will find new ways to be Faith Journey UMC in this territory.

May we try to keep up with God's love for us, God's healing power for us, and being part of God's changing this world. 2018 is certainly going to be another fascinating year!

Southern Sudan Health Projects

Abraham has gone back to Malek to continue his work. After traveling from Malek to Nairobi, Kenya, in an attempt to come to Syracuse, and after getting so ill he barely survived, and after spending months in a refugee camp in Uganda, Abraham has gone back to work as one of our Home Health Promoters.

We were able to send money to Abraham for him to carry to the other Health Workers. I imagine that they were glad to see him. Funds are always in need for this project.

South Sudan remains one of the most difficult places to live in the world. Continued struggles between tribes keeps the country in turmoil, and unsafe. We keep the people in our prayers, and we continue to do God's will through the Southern Sudan Health Project.

Then it was a grand finale with a pyrotechnics display provided by Steve Pierce.

Thanks to all who made this new kind of worship happen.



Druss Kususi

A program that tutors our New World Ministries children

During Druss Kususi we continue to work on skills with the younger children. We use workbooks and worksheets to accomplish this. Thanksgiving themed worksheets in Math and English were a big hit with everyone. One of the Moms joins us and works on the worksheets with the kids.

We are continuing with the cooking projects which included chicken noodle soup and tacos in a bag. The kids really enjoy the cooking projects where they can do a lot of hands on work including cutting and measuring.

We put together a bag of gifts for each child in Druss Kususi and those in the Sudanese worshipping community. The children enjoyed receiving books to read over vacation, a Christmas craft project, a game, an activity book, candy and a Christmas pencil. One of our high school kids got a Barron's Regents book to help him prepare for his Regents exam this Spring.

We did not meet the Saturdays before Christmas and New Year's as the schools were on vacation.

Thanks to all those who donated money or gifts for the Sudanese and Karenni Christmas presents. It truly made the children's holiday more special.

Snow-blower Needed

Faith Journey is in need of a snow-blower in order to keep the entrance ways clear for all our members in addition to our preschool children and parents. If you have one or know anyone that might like to donate one, it would be sincerely appreciated. Please contact the Faith Journey office with details, (315) 652-9186.

The New Building

900 N. Main St.



Our new building is progressing!

Every Thursday and Saturday morning a crew gathers to work on the building, even on the coldest of days. Workers come in on other days as well depending on individual's schedules. Many thanks to

the many, many hours that have been put in so far. We have had some help from a couple of other congregations.

We are now ready to put on the new roof, but we need a few days of better weather to complete the task.

Meanwhile, there is much work to be done even as we await the architect's final renderings. This will allow us to get the building permit to begin reconstruction.

Probably the most visible addition is our new sign that has been placed on the building. This announces to the world what we are doing as Faith Journey. Below is a picture of the new sign that Marilyn and Jim had made and now is displayed for all to see.

Finally, we are saddened by the death of Marilyn Knoop. Marilyn has been very involved in the store over the years. Her dream for this building to be completed was something we talked about so many times, even in her last days. We will enjoy developing a plan to memorialize Marilyn in the reconstruction of the building.



Sunday Schools

During the month of December we learned about the events surrounding the birth of Jesus. This is always a fun month for the kids as they already know the story and enjoy the crafts. They are also very excited about Christmas and this gives us a focus with them. During January we will be working on Jesus, the Greatest Prophet. Classes will include the visit of the Wise men, John the Baptist, Jesus and the children and A boy's lunch.

Nepali Sunday School

Connie Clark works with the children during the earliest service at Mattydale for the Nepali congregation. There are approximately 15 children in that group. Some of them are quite young and do the coloring and craft and hear the story. This class has a Christian Education person, parents and sometimes a teenager who help out. Connie leads the lesson and they help the children working on worksheets and doing the craft. These children were especially excited when they received a Christmas present in class.

Karenni Sunday School

The Karenni class meets at about 11:15 and can have up to 14 children in the group. Children from age 2 through elementary school come to class. The class hears the lesson, works on the booklets and enjoys the craft. The work booklets continue to be a fun way the children enjoy challenging each other. Before they come down for Sunday School these children sing a song and recite a Bible verse for the congregation worshipping upstairs. They had a contest in the middle of December to see who could memorize some verses. Children participate if they choose. It is very much a part of what that congregation likes to do. Karenni's had their Christmas celebration December 24th. We therefore didn't have class. The children loved their gifts.

Sunday Schools

Sudanese Sunday School

The Sudanese group has between 5 and 7 in the class and we are occasionally joined by one of the Moms. They enjoy the workbooks and the younger ones also spend time working on the craft. Since they are mostly all in school they are pretty self-sufficient when it comes to crafts.

Clay Sunday School

The Clay Sunday School has more consistently had one child attending sometimes others show up and there are usually younger ones in the nursery. We enjoy spending time working on the worksheets together and doing the craft.

Preschool Dinner & Worship

Nearly thirty were in attendance at our first Christmas worship for preschoolers that was held on Thursday, December 21, 2017. Jason Rieth, owner of Uriah's on Route 57, provided a wonderful meal.

After the meal we followed Mary and Joseph upstairs, and finally found them in the manger in the sanctuary. Finger lights were waved as we sung Silent Night. Tambourines were used as we sang "Joy To the World."



Picture a Day with God Thoughts

When I think of being with God for a day, I think of the times I spend in my flower garden. I go out, especially in the spring, when the early plants are just coming up. I get so excited to see them for another year, I know and feel God beside me with a smile to see the joy on my face.

Or early in the morning after we've had a warm spring rain overnight. The sun is just coming up and everything is sparkling and so pretty. God is there with me always.

Every garden has weeds. But sooner or later they have to be pulled. Down on my knees I could grumble about having to do this chore. Instead, I use this time to talk to God about anything that comes to my mind. This is not a chore at all because at the end God and I have had a good time pulling weeds and having a good conversation during it all.

~Anonymous

Please note:

The previous contribution appeared in the December issue of "The Stepping Stone" and due to a clerical mishap the authorship was incorrectly attributed to a person, rather than being ascribed to anonymous, such as the author had intended.

Acknowledgements

"Thank you" cards have been received from the following organizations in order to recognize our efforts:

- ◆ Upper New York Annual Conference for our \$1,500 contribution to the UMCOR Disaster Response
- ◆ Roxboro Rd Elementary School for the Thanksgiving bags
- ◆ Beautiful Mess Ministries for the invitation
- ◆ Brown Memorial UMC for the "delicious dinner" prepared by Faith Journey
- ◆ Serv International for our support of their artisans and farmer partners

Picture a Day with God Thoughts

As I awoke and got out of bed effortlessly, I gave thanks to God for my good health.

Then as I ate my breakfast, I watched the sky slowly glow with the rising sun. I thanked God for a beautiful day. After doing a little housework, I went outside to mulch up the last of the leaves.

As I rode around the yard on my lawn tractor, I watched the grey squirrels carry away the nuts from the black walnut tree. The red squirrels were busy getting the seeds from the pine cones they had snipped of the pine trees. The chipmunks were gathering sunflower seeds that had dropped to the ground while the birds were feeding at the feeders.

Then as I was cleaning up my lawn tractor, getting ready to put it away, I was distracted by a flock of blue birds that were checking out the blue bird houses and eating berries from the cedar tree. They are on their way south but next March they will return and hopefully pick one of my houses to raise their young.

As I relaxed in the afternoon I looked out at my yard and pictured what it would look like next spring when all the bulbs and plants start to pop up again.

As I ate my dinner I watched the sky turn brilliant red as the sun set. And I know that tomorrow morning the sun will rise in the east and set in the west and that spring will come in a few moments. Then as I went to bed I remembered a poem by Dorothy Gurney that starts:

“The kiss of the sun for pardon
The song of the birds for mirth
One’s heart is closer to God in the garden
Than anywhere else on Earth. “

And I thanked God for being near me for another beautiful day.

~Anonymous

Upcoming District Events

Tending the Soul:

Spiritual Direction & Congregational Formation

Tending the Soul is a program designed to train individuals (both clergy and laity) in Spiritual Direction and Formation as well as provide skills for leadership within their local congregations, district and conference. There is training in both one-on-one spiritual direction and group/congregational direction and formation. Held at **CASOWASCO CAMP AND RETREAT CENTER**, Moravia NY, on February 23-26, 2018; May 18-21, 2018; October 22-25, 2018; February 22-25, 2019; May 17-20, 2019

Applications are available through the brochure in the Annual Conference Session packet, the Vital Congregations section of the website, or by contacting the Director of Vital Congregations, Rev. Aaron Bouwens at aaronbouwens@unyumc.org. To learn how to register, contact Nancy Dibelius, (518)369-9147 or nancy.dibelius@gmail.com.

January 19 - UMM Chili Challenge!

Friday evening, January 19 from 6 - 8:30 pm at the **MANLIUS UMC**.

Leadership Training Day - Save the Date! Feb. 10, 2018

It's not too early to make plans to attend District Leadership Training Day!

The 7th annual District training day is scheduled **Saturday, February 10**, at the **UNITED METHODIST CONFERENCE CENTER**. As in past years, a variety of workshops will be offered in the morning and afternoon by folks from throughout our district and Conference. Please save the date - you won't want to miss it!

Basic Lay Servant Course, January 13 and January 20

BASIC Lay Servant Ministries Training will be held on two Saturdays, January 13 and 20, 2018 at **MANLIUS UNITED METHODIST CHURCH**, 111 Wesley St. Manlius, NY 13104, from 9:45 am until 3:30 pm.

Lay Servant Ministries offer people a variety of opportunities to serve God and neighbor. The Basic Course encourages people to recognize and use their spiritual gifts for work in the Church. It guides participants through thoughtful reflection on the areas of leading, caring, communicating and spreading the love of Christ into the world.

If you are interested in this course, please print and complete the application form, have it signed by your pastor and return it to United Methodist Church, P.O. Box 177, Manlius NY 13104 with a check payable to "UNYAC" in the sum of \$10.00 by **January 9, 2018**.

Each participant is required to order in advance the participant's book "Lay Servant Ministries" by Sandy Zeigler Jackson and Brian Jackson (available through Cokesbury.com, Amazon.com or any other bookstore). This course will be taught by Rev. Joseph Kim. For more information, please contact Pastor Joseph at jkim1107@gmail.com church office (315) 682-8021 or cell (315) 530-8568.



January 2018

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
Dec 31	1 <i>Happy New Year</i>	2 6:30 PM - Worship Planning	3 9 - 12 PM - Little Steps	4 9 AM - 12 PM - Workday @ New Building 10 AM - <u>Cradle & Beyond</u> Committee Meeting (Dunkin Donuts - Rt. 11 & Bear Rd.)	5 9 - 12 PM - Little Steps 6:30 PM - <u>Cradle & Beyond + 4 Trustees</u> (Dunkin Donuts - Rt. 11 & Bear Rd.)	6 9 AM - 12 PM - Workday @ New Building
7	8 9 - 12 PM - Little Steps 6 PM - <u>Little Steps</u> Committee 7 PM - Committee to <u>Re-Design Clay Campus</u>	9	10 9 - 12 PM - Little Steps	11 9 AM - 12 PM - Workday @ New Building	12 9 - 12 PM - Little Steps	13 9 AM - 12 PM - Workday @ New Building
14 6:30 PM - Worship Planning	15	16	17 9 - 12 PM - Little Steps	18 9 AM - 12 PM - Workday @ New Building	19 9 - 12 PM - Little Steps	20 9 AM - 12 PM - Workday @ New Building
21	22 9 - 12 PM - Little Steps 10:30 AM - <u>Southern Sudan Health Project Meeting</u>	23 3 PM - 7 PM - American Red Cross Blood Drive	24 9 - 12 PM - Little Steps	25 9 AM - 12 PM - Workday @ New Building	26 9 - 12 PM - Little Steps	27 9 AM - 12 PM - Workday @ New Building
28 6:30 PM - Worship Planning	29 9 - 12 PM - Little Steps	30	31 9 - 12 PM - Little Steps	Feb 1 9 AM - 12 PM - Workday @ New Building	2 9 - 12 PM - Little Steps	3 9 AM - 12 PM - Workday @ New Building

December 31: Revelation 21:1-7
The story describes a new heaven and new earth. We will have a joyous celebration awaiting the new year. At Clay, we will end the service with a bang!

January 7: Matthew 2:1-12/Mark 1: 4-11
This is the beginning of the Epiphany season. We will celebrate two different stories, the story of the Wise Men and celebrate the story of Jesus' baptism. We will also celebrate communion.

January 14: John 1:43-51
This is the story of Jesus calling Phillip and Nathaniel to come and follow him. There will be a special Human Relations Day offering and we will also recognize Martin Luther King Day.

January 21: Jonah
We will be sharing the story of Jonah on this day. We will have fun with this story of God calling reluctant Jonah to offer God's Word.

January 28: Mark 1:21-28
The story of a man with an evil spirit is the focus of the worship. It is a story of the power of Jesus to heal the very core of our beings.

February 4: Mark 1:29-39
The story of Jesus healing the sick, including Peter's mother-in-law. The power of Jesus' healing continues in the worship. We will celebrate Holy Communion on this day.

Sunday Services Schedule

9:30 AM - Contemporary Worship @ Clay
11 AM - Traditional Worship @ Clay
12:30 PM - Traditional Worship @ Pitcher Hill Community Church at 605 Bailey Rd. in N Syracuse